

A13

ID number.

45. (Amended) The method of claim 41 wherein the code comprises a player

REMARKS

The Summary of the Invention has been revised to correspond with the amended claims.

Responding to the Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112 section of the Office Action, the rejection of claims 24-48 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite is respectfully traversed. The Examiner takes the position that the word "interactive" is indefinite in claims 24 and 41. The term "interactive" is defined in the specification as follows (page 12, par. 35): "In this specification and claims, interactive means capable of accepting input from a human." Since the word "interactive" is defined, the applicants respectfully request that the section 112 rejection be withdrawn.

Responding to the Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102, the rejection of claims 1-8, 18-31 and 41-48 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Dubno et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,722,053, "Dubno") is respectfully traversed. Subject matter of claim 8 has been incorporated into amended claim 1, which is limited to:

an interactive first communication unit operable from the first gaming location, including a first display visible from the first gaming location and displaying a message depending on a preference of a player stored in the memory before the message is displayed at the first gaming location;

The above-quoted limitation is supported by the embodiments of the invention described in paragraphs 37-38, 41-42, 45, 49-51 and 54-55 of the specification. Dubno

does not teach or suggest such a novel limitation. Dubno interrupts a game and displays a menu at a gaming location after a time period uncontrolled by a player (Col. 2, lines 21-31; Col. 4, line 32-47). The menu cannot be a preference of the player displayed at the gaming location, because the display of the menu cannot be controlled by the player. Moreover, the menu is not displayed depending on a preference of a player stored in memory before the message is displayed. There are advantages to storing preferences in memory before the message is displayed. For example, the player preferences need be entered by a player only once, and thereafter the messages are displayed based on the preferences. This is a substantial convenience to the player. For all the foregoing reasons, amended claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 1-7 depend on claim 1 and also are allowable for the foregoing reasons.
(Claim 8 has been cancelled.)

Amended claim 18 is limited to:

an interactive first communication unit operable from the first gaming location and arranged to accommodate a first player, the first communication unit including a first display visible from the first gaming location, enabling entry of at least one of a name of a second player and a second player code and enabling entry of a first message;

an interactive second communication unit operable from the second gaming location and arranged to accommodate a second player, the second communication unit including a second display visible from the second gaming location, enabling entry of at least one of a name of the

first player and a first player code and enabling entry of a second message; and

a network arranged transmit data resulting in display of the first message on the second display and arranged to transmit data resulting in display of the second message on the first display.

The above-quoted limitations are supported by the embodiments of the invention described in connection with Figs. 13-14. Nothing in Dubno teaches or suggests the above-quoted limitations. Dubno merely enables a player to select from a menu and to communicate the selection to a kitchen (Col. 2, lines 21-31; Col. 4, line 32-47). Communication between gaming locations is not taught or suggested. In addition, Dubno does not teach or suggest enabling entry of at least one of a name of a player and a player code and enabling entry of a message. For all of the foregoing reasons, amended claim 18 allowable.

Claims 19-23 are dependent on claim 18 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 18. Claims 19 and 20 have been amended to further distinguish them from Dubno. Amended claim 19 is limited to:

The apparatus of claim 18 and further comprising a central authority arranged to identify the first gaming location in response to at least one of the name of the first player and the first player code and arranged to identify the second gaming location in response to at least one of the name of the second player and the second player code.

The above-quoted limitation is supported by the embodiments of the invention described in paragraphs 42 and 61 of the specification. Dubno does not teach or suggest the above-quoted limitation. Dubno cannot locate a gaming location by any means, much less the novel feature claimed. As a result, claim 19 is allowable.

Amended claim 20 is limited to:

a first card reader operable from the first gaming location and a second card reader operable from the second gaming location, the first and second card readers being operable to read a code from a card entered by a player and wherein the central authority identifies at least one of the first gaming location and second gaming location in response to the code

The above-quoted limitation is supported by the embodiments of the invention described in paragraphs 40-42 and 61. Dubno does not disclose any card reader, much less a card reader and central authority with the claimed features. As a result, claim 20 is allowable.

Amended method claim 24 is analogous to amended claim 1 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 25-31 are dependent on claim 24 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 24. In addition, claims 27 and 28 have been amended to further distinguish them from Dubno.

Amended claim 27 is limited to:

The method of claim 24 wherein the preference comprises a preference authorizing the player to be located and wherein generating messages at the service station comprises generating an identification of the location of the player

The above-quoted limitation is supported by the embodiments of the invention described in paragraphs 37-38, 41-42, 45, 49-51 and 54-55 of the specification. Dubno does not teach or suggest such a preference or the identification of such a location. As a result, claim 24 is allowable.

Claim 28 is limited to:

The method of claim 27 wherein the identification of the location comprises a map

Amended claim 28 is dependent on claim 27 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 27. In addition, Dubno does not teach or suggest a map. As a result, claim 28 is allowable.

Amended claim 41 is analogous to amended claim 18 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 18. Claims 42-48 are dependent on claim 41 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 41.

In response to the rejection of claims 49-63 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e), claims 49-63 have been cancelled.

The rejection of claims 13-15 and 37-39 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dubno in view of Hedrick et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,135,884, "Hedrick") is respectfully traversed. Claims 13-15 are dependent on amended claim 1 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 1. In addition, claim 14 has been amended to distinguish it from Dubno and Hedrick. Amended claim 14 is limited to:

The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first display displays a message enabling entry of a name of a person and a message.

The above-quoted limitation is supported by the embodiments of the invention described in connection with Figs. 13-14. Neither Dubno nor Hedrick teach or suggest a message enabling entry of a name of a person as claimed. On page 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner states:

Dubno et al. lacks in disclosing a menu or reservation services and personal messages. Hedrick teaches of a gaming machine having a secondary display. The secondary display is used to display a menu of reservation services available or a menu of personal message services available. The display at the gaming machine can display a message sent to it from the service station (See Hedrick col. 15 lines 55-67; col. 16 lines 1-5).

Although Hedrick does refer to menu driven requests that may include messages for a particular room (Col. 16, lines 1-5), Hedrick does not teach or suggest enabling entry of a name of a person as claimed. As a result, claim 14 is allowable.

Claims 37-39 are dependent on amended claim 24 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 24.

The rejection of claims 9-11 and 32-35 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dubno in view of Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,110,041, "Walker") is respectfully traversed. Claim 9 has been amended to incorporate subject matter of claim 10 and is limited to:

[Apparatus] wherein the [claimed] preference comprises a preference authorizing the player to be located, and wherein the second display is

arranged to display an identification of the location of the player in response to the [claimed] code.

The above-quoted limitation is supported by the embodiments of the invention described in paragraph 43 of the specification. Neither Dubno nor Walker teaches or suggests the above-quoted limitation of claim 9. On page 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner cites only Col. 3 lines 30-54 of Walker. This section teaches that the preferences are used only to configure the game (Col. 3, line 39-40 and 51-53). The undersigned has been unable to locate any section of Walker the teaches locating a player by any means, much less the claimed features. More specifically, there is no known teaching or suggestion that a preference authorizes a player to be located. This feature is advantages, because a player may not want to be located. Even if Walker were combined with Dubno as suggested by the Examiner, the resulting combination would not result in the claimed features. Claim 11 depends on claim 9. As a result, claims 9 and 11 are allowable. (Claim 10 has been cancelled.)

Regarding claims 32-35, claims 32 and 34 have been cancelled. Amended claim 33 is analogous to amended claim 9 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 9. Amended claim 35 is dependent on claim 33 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 33. In addition, claim 35 is limited to a map, which is neither taught nor suggested, by Dubno nor Walker. As a result, claim 35 is allowable.

The rejection of claims 12 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dubno in view of Franchi (U.S. Patent No. 5,770,533) is respectfully traversed. Claim 12 is dependent on amended claim 1 and is allowable for the same reasons as

claim 1. Claim 36 is dependent on amended claim 24 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 24.

The rejection of claims 16, 17 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dubno in view of Falciglia (U.S. Patent No. 5,971,849) is respectfully traversed. On page 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner states:

Dubno et al. lacks in disclosing a second gaming location in communication with the first. Falciglia teaches of a gaming machine, which is in connection to a central authority and a second gaming location comprising a third display. A player may communicate with another gaming machine through the central authority. The central authority is arranged to transmit data resulting in display of a message on the third display and wherein the first display displays a message received from the second gaming location. The message on the third display comprises a message received from the first gaming location (See Falciglia. Figs. 2, 4, 7; col. 9 lines 9-19).

Amended claim 16 is limited to:

The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first gaming location is arranged to accommodate a first player and wherein the first communication unit enables entry of at least one of a name of a second player and a second player code and enables entry of a first message, the apparatus further comprising a central authority, a second gaming location arranged to accommodate a second player, an interactive third communication unit operable from the second gaming location, including a third display visible

from the second gaming location, the third communication unit enabling entry of at least one of a name of the first player and a first player code and enabling entry of a second message, wherein the central authority is arranged to identify the first gaming location in response to at least one of the name of the first player and the first player code and is arranged to identify the second gaming location in response to at least one of the second player name and second player code,...

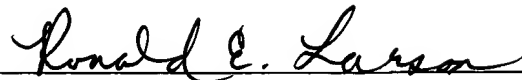
Although Falciglia teaches a chat room for sending messages between gaming locations, he does not teach or suggest the underlined features quoted above that enable entry of at least one of a name of a player and a player code. Falciglia teaches that messages from players logged into the chat room may be broadcast to players logged into the chat room (Col. 6, lines 59-62; Figs. 5 and 7). However, there is no teaching or suggestion of the entry of at least one of a name of a player and a player code. Thus, even if Dubno and Falciglia were combined in the manner suggested by the Examiner, they would not result in the claimed underlined features. Thus, claim 16 is allowable. Claim 17 depends on claim 16 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 16. In addition, claim 17 is limited to a code comprising a player ID number, another feature not taught or suggested by Falciglia. As a result, claim 17 is allowable.

Amended claim 40 is analogous to amended claim 16 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 16.

For all the foregoing reasons, each of claims 1-7, 9, 11-31, 33 and 35-48 defines patentable subject matter, and early allowance is solicited.

Date: March 4, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ronald E. Larson", written over a horizontal line.

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ATTACHMENT SHOWING CLAIM AMENDMENTS
Application No. 09/982,244, Filed October 17, 2001
Docket No. 13253US01

Kindly incorporate subject matter from claim 8 into claim 1 as follows:

1. (Amended) In a gaming system comprising a memory, a service station and at least a first gaming location, apparatus for enabling communication with the service station and the first gaming location comprising:

an interactive first communication unit operable from the first gaming location including a first display visible from the first gaming location and displaying a message depending on a preference of a player stored in the memory before the message is displayed at the first gaming location;

an interactive second communication unit operable from the service station, including a second display visible from the service station; and

a network arranged to transmit data so that messages are displayed on the first display and the second display.

Kindly incorporate subject matter from claim 10 into claim 9 as follows:

9. (Amended) The apparatus of claim [8] 1 wherein the system comprises a central authority and a card reader, the card reader being operable from the first gaming location and arranged to read a code from a card entered by the player at the first gaming location, wherein the preference is stored in the central authority, [and] wherein the preference is accessed in response to the code, wherein the preference comprises a preference authorizing the player to be located, and wherein the second display is arranged to display an identification of the location of the player in response to the code.

11. (Amended) The apparatus of claim [10] 9 wherein the identification of the location comprises a map.

14. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first display displays a [menu of personal] message [services available] enabling entry of a name of a person and a message.

16. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first gaming location is arranged to accommodate a first player and wherein the first communication unit enables entry of at least one of a name of a second player and a second player code and enables entry of a first message, the apparatus further comprising a central authority, a second gaming location arranged to accommodate a second player, an interactive third communication unit operable from the second gaming location, including a third display visible from the second gaming location, the third communication unit enabling entry of at least one of a name of the first player and a first player code and enabling entry of a second message, wherein the central authority is arranged to identify the first gaming location in response to at least one of the name of the first player and the first player code and is arranged to identify the second gaming location in response to at least one of the second player name and second player code, and wherein the network is arranged to transmit data resulting in display of [a] the first message on the third display and is arranged to transmit data resulting in display of the second message on the first display [wherein the first display displays a message received from the second gaming location].

17. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 wherein the code comprises a player ID number [message on the third display comprises a message received from the first gaming location].

18. (Amended) In a gaming system comprising a first gaming location and a second gaming location, apparatus for enabling communication between the first and second gaming locations comprising:

an interactive first communication unit operable from the first gaming location[,] and arranged to accommodate a first player, the first communication unit including a first display visible from the first gaming location [and arranged to] ,enabling entry of at least one of a name of a second player and a second player code and enabling entry of a first message [display a first message];

an interactive second communication unit operable from the second gaming location[,] and arranged to accommodate a second player, the second communication unit including a second display visible from the second gaming location [service station and arranged to display a second message] ,enabling entry of at least one of a name of the first player and a first player code and enabling entry of a second message; and

a network arranged transmit data resulting in display of the first message on the second display and arranged to transmit data resulting in display of the second message on the first display [between the first and second gaming locations, whereby the first and second messages are exchanged].

19. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 18 and further comprising a central authority arranged to identify the first gaming location in response to at least one of the name of the first player and the first player code and arranged to identify the second

gaming location in response to at least one of the name of the second player and the second player code [wherein the first display comprises touch screen display].

20. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 18 and further comprising a first card reader operable from the first gaming location and a second card reader operable from the second gaming location, the first and second card readers being operable to read a code from a card entered by a player and wherein the central authority identifies at least one of the first gaming location and second gaming location in response to the code [wherein the second display comprises a touch screen display].

21. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the code comprises a player ID number [first gaming location comprises a gaming machine and wherein the first display is coupled to the gaming machine].

Kindly incorporate subject matter from claim 32 into claim 24 as follows:

24. (Amended) In a gaming system comprising a service station, a memory and at least a first gaming location enabling play by a first player, a method of enabling communication with the service station and the first gaming location comprising:

storing a preference of the first player in the memory;

generating messages at the first gaming location and displaying messages visible from the first gaming location interactively after the preference is stored in the memory;

generating messages at the service station and displaying messages visible from the service station interactively; and

transmitting the generated messages.

27. (Amended) The method of claim 24 wherein the preference comprises a preference authorizing the player to be located and wherein generating messages at the service station comprises generating an identification of the location of the player [first gaming location comprises a touch screen display and wherein said generating messages at the first gaming location comprises touching the display].

28. (Amended) The method of claim [24] 27 wherein the identification of the location comprises a map [service station comprises a touch screen display and wherein said generating messages at the service station comprises touching the display].

Kindly incorporate subject matter from claim 34 into claim 33 as follows:

33. (Amended) The method of claim [32] 24 wherein the preference comprises a preference authorizing the player to be located, and wherein the method further comprises: [wherein said displaying messages visible from the first gaming location further comprises:]

[storing the preference;]

reading at the first gaming location a code corresponding to the player; [and]

accessing the stored preference in response to the code;[.]

generating an identification of the location of the player in response to the code;
and displaying the identification at the service station.

35. (Amended) The method of claim [34] 33 wherein the identification of the location comprises a map.

40. (Amended) The method of claim 24 wherein the system further comprises a second gaming location enabling play by a second player and wherein the method further comprises:

enabling entry of at least one of a name of the second player and a second player code from the first gaming location;

enabling entry of a first message from the first gaming location;

transmitting the first message generated at the first gaming location to the second gaming location;

displaying the first message generated at the first gaming location in a manner visible at the second gaming location;

[generating messages at the second gaming location;]

enabling entry of at least one of a name of the first player and a first player code from the second gaming location;

enabling entry of a second message from the second gaming location;

transmitting the [messages] second message generated at the second gaming location to the first gaming location; and

displaying the [messages] second message generated at the second gaming location in a manner visible at the first gaming location. [; and]

[displaying messages generated at the first gaming location in a manner visible at the second gaming location.]

41. (Amended) In a gaming system comprising a first gaming location arranged to accommodate play by a first player and a second gaming location arranged

to accommodate play by a second player, a method of enabling communication between the first and second gaming locations comprising:

generating messages at the first gaming location and displaying messages from the second gaming location at the first gaming location interactively;

enabling entry of at least one of a name of the second player and a second player code from the first gaming location;

enabling entry of a first message from the first gaming location;

generating messages at the second gaming location and displaying messages from the first gaming location at the second gaming location interactively;

enabling entry of at least one of a name of the first player and a first player code from the second gaming location;

enabling entry of a second message from the second gaming location;

and

transmitting the messages between the first and second gaming locations resulting in display of the first message at the second gaming location and display of the second message at the second gaming location.

45. (Amended) The method of claim 41 wherein the code comprises a player ID number [second gaming location comprises a touch screen display and wherein said generating messages at the second gaming location comprises touching the display].